

## NEGATIVE IONS WIPE OUT HOSPITAL INFECTIONS

Repeated airborne infections of the bacteria *Acinetobacter* in an intensive care ward have been eliminated by the installation of air ionisers.

In the first such epidemiological study, researchers found that the infection rate fell to zero during the year-long trial.

"We were absolutely astounded to find such clear-cut results," said engineer Clive Begg at the University of Leeds.

Stephen Dean, a consultant at the St James's Hospital in Leeds, where the trial took place, said: "The results have been fantastic—so much so, that we have asked the university to leave the ionisers with us."

The ionisers produce negative ions that collide with suspended particles and give them a charge. The scientists believe charged particles aggregate and fall out of the air, thereby disinfecting the atmosphere and stopping the transmission of infection.

Research by electronics company Sharp has shown that positive and negative ions produced by their air conditioning systems can inactivate viruses, including those that cause influenza. But this new study is the first to link such an effect with negative ions to reduced infections in hospitals.

(Source: *New Scientist*, January 3, 2003, <http://www.newscientist.com/news/news.jsp?id=ns99993228>)



## AIR POLLUTION CAN CAUSE GENETIC MUTATIONS

Six years ago, scientists found that Sherring gulls living near steel mills around the harbour in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, tended to have high DNA mutation rates. These mutations were then transferred to the next generation of gulls, increasing the offspring's chances of developing genetic diseases like cancer and birth defects. Researchers suspected at the time that air pollution was causing the mutations, but they couldn't eliminate other factors, such as polluted water or contaminated fish, that also could have been responsible.

Now, other scientists have published a paper indicating that air pollution is indeed the likely culprit behind the

mutations. What's more, there's no reason why human DNA should be immune from the same pollution. Our genes may also be damaged and then inherited by our children.

Researchers say there is an urgent need to investigate the genetic consequences associated with exposure to chemical pollution through the inhalation of urban and industrial air. Indeed, with the vast majority of us now living in urban areas and millions of people exposed to air pollution from steel mills, coal-fired power plants and automobiles, we cannot afford simply to accept the industry line of doing nothing—especially when it could be the next generation that

suffers the most.

(Source: *Environment Network News.com*, January 7, 2003)

## IMF APPROVES SINGLE CURRENCY FOR GULF STATES

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved plans that will achieve monetary union for Persian Gulf states by 2005 and the launch of a single currency by 2010. The IMF has mapped out the steps that will be taken during the unification period to establish the single Gulf currency within the first decade of the new millennium.

The new currency will initially be limited to members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which includes some of the most wealthy nations on Earth. The GCC comprises Saudi Arabia (the world's most important source of oil) as well as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and United Arab Emirates.

(Sources: "On a Common Currency for the GCC Countries", *IMF's Policy Discussion Paper No. 02/12*, December 2, 2002; *Common Currency*, *IMF's Finance & Development magazine*, vol. 39, no. 4, December 2002)

## LAWSUIT CHARGING LAB ORIGIN OF AIDS TO BE FILED

In a November 20, 2002, letter from the Office of the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, AIDS origin researcher Boyd E. Graves, JD, was given 60 days to file suit in the US federal court of his choosing.

"The people have forced the right to

## The Digital Camera



sue the United States over their 'creation', 'production' and 'proliferation' of HIV/AIDS through the secret federal virus development program, the US Special [AIDS] Virus program (1948–1978)," said Graves.

"The yearly progress reports of the secret program provide the irrefutable narrative proof of the linkage of experiment to the flowchart 'research logic' of the African Holocaust. This best explains how Black people account for 13% of the population and 50% of all new AIDS cases."

Graves, a civil rights lawyer and decorated US Navy veteran, filed a similar complaint with Ohio's Federal Court in 1998, resulting in a 33-month legal battle and an appeal in 2001 to the US Supreme Court.

His lawsuit prompted Congress to request an investigation into the missing appropriations of the secret federal virus development program, Special Virus, through the US General Accounting Office.

The US government's official report was made public following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and was highly criticised as being a "total white-wash" by many independent investigators, including Professor Robert Lee and Dr Leonard G. Horowitz (author of *Emerging Viruses: AIDS & Ebola – Nature, Accident or Intentional?*).

Graves and his supporters say they are confident the evidence of the laboratory birth of AIDS is irrefutable.

"We can show through the progress reports of the secret program that the original name of HIV was ESP-1 virus, developed in accordance with the phases of the flowchart," Graves said.

"The United States purposefully and intentionally complemented the 'small-pox' vaccine that went to Africa and the 'hepatitis B' vaccine that was given to homosexuals that the United States recruited for that purpose."

Graves said he is hopeful people support his efforts by downloading the 1971 flowchart document from his website, <http://www.boydgraves.com>, and by writing to elected and appointed health officials.

"We have found the wellspring of the genesis of AIDS," said Graves. "It is our nation state; it is us."

(Source: Boyd Graves news release, November 29, 2002, <http://www.boyd-graves.com/news/112802.html>)

## US HOMELAND SECURITY ACT PROTECTS VACCINE-MAKERS

It had been a mystery in Washington for weeks. Just before US President George W. Bush signed the Homeland Security Bill into law, an unknown member of Congress inserted a provision into the legislation that blocks lawsuits against the maker of a controversial vaccine preservative called *thimerosal*, used in vaccines that are given to children.

Drug giant Eli Lilly and Co. makes *thimerosal*. It's the mercury in the preservative that thousands of parents say has caused autism in their children.

But nobody in Congress would admit to adding the provision, until House Majority Leader Dick Army (R-Texas) told CBS News that he did it to keep vaccine-makers from going out of business under the weight of mounting lawsuits. "I did it, and I'm proud of it," he said. "It's a matter of national security. We need their vaccines if the country is attacked with germ weapons."

Rep. Dan Burton (R-Ind) isn't buying it. The grandfather of an autistic child, Burton says Army slipped the provision in at the last minute, too late for debate.

Critics say the Bush family and the current administration have too many ties to Eli Lilly: there's President Bush's father, who sat on the company's board in the 1970s; White House budget director Mitch Daniels, once an Eli Lilly executive; and Eli Lilly CEO Sidney Taurel, who serves on the President's Homeland Security Advisory Council.

In November, attorneys for the Bush administration asked a federal court to

order that documents on hundreds of cases of autism allegedly caused by childhood vaccines be kept from the public.

Attorneys for the families of hundreds of autistic children charged that the government was trying to keep the information out of civil courts, where juries might be convinced to award large judgments against vaccine manufacturers.

More significantly, this last-minute slipping-in of hidden provisions raises other issues.

Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), said: "The ability of a special interest group to secretly insert provisions into law for its own narrow benefit and to the detriment of the public interest raises fundamental questions about the integrity of our government."

(Sources: Reuters, November 26, 2002; CBS Worldwide, December 17, 2002)

## PHYSICIST BLOWS WHISTLE ON US MISSILE DEFENCE

The credibility of President Bush's multibillion-dollar missile defence plans are being questioned by leading scientists after claims that the results of key tests were falsified.

The criticism is led by Theodore Postol, a physicist and persistent missile defence critic at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who has said that the institute is sitting on what is potentially "the most serious fraud that we've seen at a great American university".

After months of demanding an inquiry into the affair, Ed Crawley, Chairman of MIT's Aeronautics and Astronautics



Department, has reversed previous refusals and recommended an investigation.

The issue in question goes to the heart of missile defence technology. The United States unilaterally withdrew last year from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia in order to pursue the controversial proposed system, which is designed to intercept enemy warheads in flight—a feat likened to hitting a bullet with a bullet.

Dr Postol and his criticisms cannot be dismissed lightly. After the Gulf War, he challenged the Pentagon's claims for the success of its defensive *Patriot* missiles, saying they had intercepted few, if any, Iraqi *Scud* missiles. Despite initial ridicule, his assertion is now accepted. (Source: *Times Online*, January 3, 2003)

## NEW INVENTION SECRECY ORDERS REPORTED

The United States government invoked the Invention Secrecy Act of 1951 to impose new secrecy orders on 139 patent applications during fiscal year 2002, thereby blocking their publication. A total of 4,792 secrecy orders remained in effect at the end of the year, according to statistics compiled by the Patent and Trademark Office.

Secrecy orders can be imposed on patent applications at the discretion of government agencies whenever, in their judgement, disclosure of the invention could be "detrimental to national security".

The Invention Secrecy Act is one of two laws that permit the government to

prevent publication of privately generated information. (The other law is the Atomic Energy Act.) The constitutionality of such authority, which appears to be at odds with the First Amendment, has never been tested in court.

Of the 139 new secrecy orders issued last year, 37 were imposed on private inventors or businesses who developed their inventions without government funding. Such orders, which are referred to as "John Doe" orders, are the most potentially problematic from a constitutional point of view.

(Source: *Secrecy News*, no. 1, January 6, 2003; statistics at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/othergov/invention/stats.html>)

## MAGNETIC POLE SHIFT DUE

Scientists have found large holes appearing in the Earth's magnetic field, suggesting that the North and South poles are preparing to reverse positions in a magnetic flip. A period of chaos could be imminent when compasses no longer point north, migrating animals head in the wrong direction and satellites are burnt up by solar radiation.

The holes lie over the South Atlantic and the Arctic. The changes were revealed after detailed data from the Danish Ørsted satellite were analysed. Results were compared with data from earlier satellites.

The speed of the change has surprised scientists. Nils Olsen, of the Centre for Planetary Science in Denmark, one of several centres analysing the data, said that the Earth's core appeared to be undergoing dramatic changes. "This

could be the state in which the Earth's geodynamo operates before reversing."

Andy Jackson, a specialist in geomagnetism at Leeds University, said a change was long overdue. "Such flips normally happen every 500,000 years, but it has been 750,000 years since the last one."

(Source: *Sunday Times*, Jan 12, 2003)

## BRITISH DOCTOR BLASTS CHEMOTHERAPY AS WORTHLESS

Who would have believed that the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine* would applaud an alternative cancer therapy and, in the same article, blast chemotherapy as worthless?

Well, it happened in the December 12, 2002, issue, in a review by James Spencer Malpas, MD, DPhil, of St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, UK. You can find the article at the webpage <http://content.NEJM.org/cgi/content/full/347/24/1986>, if you're willing to fork out \$10, but, for those who don't want to, here are some key quotes.

Quote #1: "He found the evidence in favour of conventional treatment unconvincing and opted for such alternative therapies as Gerson therapy with its strict diet, vitamins and enemas. High-dose vitamin C and high-dose vitamin D, both contraindicated in the orthodox treatment of multiple myeloma, were later added to the regimen. What is evident is that this was the right therapy for him."

Quote #2: "The irony of the whole situation is that a recent randomised trial of treatment for stage-1 multiple myeloma by Riccardi and colleagues (*British Journal of Cancer* 2000;82:1254-60) showed no advantage of conventional chemotherapy over no treatment."

(Source: *Consumer Advocate Tim Bolen*, Dec 26, 2002, via [http://www.wellnesstoday.com/doctors\\_question\\_chemo.htm](http://www.wellnesstoday.com/doctors_question_chemo.htm))

## OESTROGEN IS A CARCINOGEN

A United States government report has for the first time identified oestrogen-containing drugs as cancer-causing agents.

Steroidal oestrogens (estrogens) were added to the National Toxicology Program list because of new research data linking the compounds to an increased risk of cancer of the endometrium, or lining of the uterus. They have also been associated with a rise in the breast cancer risk.

Steroidal oestrogens are used in hormone replacement therapy for



menopausal women, and physicians are supposed to weigh the risks of cancer against the benefits of the drugs.

(Source: Reuters, December 11, 2002; see Sherrill Sellman's article this issue)

## FDA APPROVES PROZAC FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

On January 4, 2003, the US Food and Drug Administration approved Eli Lilly & Company's Prozac (fluoxetine) to treat depression and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) in children and adolescents aged seven to 17 years.

According to the FDA, Prozac is the first selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) to receive approval for treating depression in children.

Indianapolis-based Lilly lost its patent protection on Prozac in August 2001. The drug was once a blockbuster, pulling in sales of US\$2.5 billion in 2000. Since losing patent protection, several generic formulations of Prozac have flooded the US market, cutting sharply into Lilly's revenues. In the meantime, Lilly introduced Sarafem—Prozac by another name—to treat "PMDD" in women.

(Source: Reuters, January 4, 2003; also see Sherrill Sellman's article this issue)

## POLICE FRAMED GENOA ANTI-GLOBALISATION ACTIVISTS

Police in Genoa, Italy, have admitted to fabricating evidence against anti-globalisation activists in an attempt to justify police brutality during protests at the July 2001 G8 Summit. More than 100,000 people participated in the 2001 Genoa protests, most of them peacefully.

According to BBC and Deutsche Presse-Agentur reports, a senior Genoa police officer, Pietro Troiani, has admitted that police planted two Molotov cocktails in a school that was serving as a dormitory for activists from the Genoa Social Forum. The bombs were apparently planted to justify the brutal July 22 raid on the school, when 200 officers took the sleeping activists by surprise. Another senior officer has admitted to faking the stabbing of a police officer in order to frame protesters.

These revelations have emerged during a parliamentary inquiry into police conduct. Three police chiefs have been transferred and at least 77 officers have been investigated on brutality charges.

(Source: Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting [FAIR], January 10, 2003, <http://www.fair.org>)

## THE 10 WORST CORPORATIONS OF 2002

The year 2002 will forever be remembered as the year of corporate crime. For *Multinational Monitor's* 10 Worst Corporations of 2002 list, we included only Andersen from the ranks of the financial criminals and miscreants. Andersen's assembly-line document destruction certainly merits a place on the list. (Citigroup appears on the list as well, but primarily for a subsidiary's involvement in predatory lending, as well as the company's funding of environmentally destructive projects around the world.) As for the rest, we present a collection of polluters, dangerous pill peddlers, modern-day mercenaries, enablers of human rights abuses, merchants of death and beneficiaries of rural destruction and misery.

*Multinational Monitor's* 10 Worst Corporations of 2002, appearing in alphabetical order, are:

- **Arthur Andersen**, for a massive scheme to destroy documents related to the Enron meltdown. "Tons of paper relating to the Enron audit were promptly shredded as part of the orchestrated document destruction," a federal indictment against Andersen alleged. "The shredder at the Andersen office at the Enron building was used virtually constantly and, to handle the overload, dozens of large trunks filled, with Enron documents" to be shredded, were sent to Andersen's main Houston office. Andersen was convicted for illegal document destruction, effectively putting the company out of business.

- **BAT**, for operating worldwide programs supposedly designed to prevent youth smoking but which actually make the practice more attractive to kids (by suggesting smoking is an adult activity), continuing to deny the harmful health effects of second-hand smoke, and working to oppose efforts at the World Health Organization to adopt a strong Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

- **Caterpillar**, for selling bulldozers to the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), which are used as an instrument of war to destroy Palestinian homes and buildings. The IDF has destroyed more than 7,000 Palestinian homes since the beginning of the Israeli occupation in 1967, leaving 30,000 people homeless.

- **Citigroup**, both for its deep involvement in the Enron and other financial scandals and its predatory lending practices through its recently acquired subsidiary, The Associates. Citigroup paid US\$215 million to resolve Federal Trade Commission (FTC) charges that The Associates engaged in systematic and widespread deceptive and abusive lending practices.

- **DynCorp**, a controversial private firm which subcontracts military services with the US Defense Department, for flying planes that spray herbicides on coca crops in Colombia. Farmers on the ground allege that the herbicides are killing their legal crops, and exposing them to dangerous toxins.

- **M&M/Mars**, for responding tepidly to revelations about child slaves in the West African fields where much of the world's cocoa is grown, and refusing to commit to purchasing a modest 5% of its product from Fair Trade providers.

- **Procter & Gamble**, the manufacturer of Folger's coffee and part of the coffee roaster oligopoly, for failing to take action to address plummeting coffee bean prices. Low prices have pushed tens of thousands of farmers in Central America, Ethiopia, Uganda and elsewhere to the edge of survival, or destroyed their means of livelihood altogether.

- **Schering Plough**, for a series of scandals, most prominently allegations of repeated failure over recent years to fix problems in manufacturing dozens of drugs at four of its facilities in New Jersey, USA and Puerto Rico. Schering paid US\$500 million to settle the case with the US Food and Drug Administration.

- **Shell Oil**, for continuing business as usual as one of the world's leading environmental violators—while marketing itself as a socially and environmentally responsible company.

- **Wyeth**, for using duplicitous means, and without sufficient scientific proof, to market hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to women as a fountain of youth. Scientific evidence reported in 2002 showed that long-term HRT actually threatens women's lives, by increasing the risks of breast cancer, heart attack, stroke and pulmonary embolism.

What's the lesson to be drawn from the 10 Worst Corporations list? Not only are Enron, WorldCom, Adelphia, Tyco and the rest indicative of a fundamentally corrupt financial system, they are representative of a rotten system of corporate dominance.

(Source: Multinational Monitor, January 2003, <http://www.multinationalmonitor.org>)